

SN. 10/676,804

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. CANO:091

REMARKS

Claims 2-7 and 9-14 are now pending in this application for which applicants seek reconsideration.

Amendment

Claims 1 and 8 have been canceled, and independent claims 2 and 9 have been amended to improve their clarity. The preamble of claim 9 also has been amended to incorporate the language contained in claim 2. Claims 3, 4, 10, and 11 have been amended to depend from only pending claim 2 or 9. No new matter has been introduced.

Art Rejection

Claims 1-5 and 8-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Okuno (USP 5,933,687), and claims 6, 7, 13, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Okuno in view of Ohki (USP 6,408,145). Applicants traverse these rejections because these references would not have disclosed or taught causing a plurality of scanners for the first mode to be driven while the image formation is being carried out in the second mode, as set forth in claims 2 and 9.

For clarity, the passage containing the language "starting a preparation" has been changed to --causing said plurality of scanners-- for the image formation in the first mode --to be driven-- while the image formation is being carried out in the second mode. In other words, in the second mode, e.g., monochrome, while the image formation is being carried out, the scanners for the image formation in the first mode, e.g., full color, are driven.

Okuno discloses a digital full-color copier having image forming units 40C, 40M, 40Y, 40K that have corresponding photosensitive drums 41C, 41M, 41Y, 41K. For a monochrome mode, only the photosensitive drum 40K is operated. In this respect, Okuno uses a clutch 53 to disengage the remaining photosensitive drums 41C, 41M, 41Y when operating in the monochrome mode, and engages the clutch when operating in the full-color mode. To properly align the photosensitive drum 40K with the remaining photosensitive drums 41C to 41Y (which are all prealigned) before engaging the clutch, when the mode is switched from monochrome to full color, the motor 54 (for driving the drums) is activated while the clutch 53 disengaged to drive only the photosensitive drum 41K. When the phase angle of the photosensitive drum 41K currently being rotated matches the phase angle stored in the RAM, the clutch is engaged to drive all the photosensitive drums 41C to 41K at the same speed for a full-color processing. See column 13, line 61 to column 14, line 11, column 15, lines 30-36, and Figs. 9, 11, and 12.

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In rejecting the claims, the examiner broadly construed the language "starting a preparation" to include the phase alignment routine for aligning the phase of the color photosensitive drums 41C to 41Y to the monochrome photosensitive drum 41K. Okuno disengages its clutch 53 when printing in the monochrome mode so that the color photosensitive drums 41C to 41Y are not driven. The examiner is of the opinion that a mode switching routine from monochrome to full color (Fig. 9, step 49a) occurs while printing in the monochrome mode. Applicants disagree. See Fig. 12 of Okuno.

Okuno does not disclose anywhere that the image formation for the color mode is initiated while printing in the monochrome mode. Indeed, Figs. 12 and 16 of Okuno explicitly illustrate that the initiation of the switch from the monochrome to the color (step g) occurs completely after the monochrome printing terminates. That is, the clutch 53 is engaged to rotate the color photosensitive drums 41C to 41Y only after the monochrome printing mode ends, which means that the corresponding scanners associated with the color photosensitive drums 41C to 41Y are not driven until the color photosensitive drums 41C to 41Y are driven in contrast to what the claimed invention calls for.

Accordingly, Okuno would not have anticipated the claimed invention.

Ohki was relied upon for the proposition that synchronizing the charging of photosensitive drums would have been obvious. Ohki would not have alleviated Okuno's shortcomings. Accordingly, even if the combination were deemed proper, for argument's sake, the combination would not have taught the invention set forth in claims 2 and 9.

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Conclusion

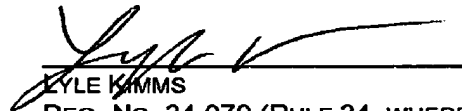
Applicants submit that the pending claims patentably distinguish over the applied references and are in condition for allowance. Should the examiner have any issues concerning this reply or any other outstanding issues remaining in this application, applicants urge the examiner to contact the undersigned to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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27 APRIL 2006

DATE

  
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